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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 2533
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 0184
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4230
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1337
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2104
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7166
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 8401
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5760
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1096
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3267
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9895
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 3279
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6321
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 0931
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2542
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3665
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0895
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2447
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: POLICE ARREST HUNDREDS THROUGHOUT PUNJAB PROVINCE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter Bodde, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) According to media reports, Pakistani police have arrested between 800 and 1,200 people -- mostly political party workers -- throughout Punjab over the last few days. Rahat Quddusi, special advisor to Punjab's Chief Minister, said that the arrests are an effort to maintain law and order, and the decision to crack down was made at a meeting held last Friday chaired by Punjab's Inspector General of Police. Those picked up, Quddusi said, were on a watch list compiled by Pakistan's intelligence agencies.

12. (U) Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto publicly condemned the arrest of her party's political activists -- which by mid-day June 7 totalled approximately 200, according to People's Party officials. Bhutto said that the arrests were a result of her party's decision to support the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists in its observation of a "black day" in protest against the government's recent curbs against the media. Other political parties, including Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf, and members of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal coalition are claiming their party workers have also been arrested.

13. (C) Comment: Police roundups of political party workers ahead of protest rallies have been common, and workers are generally released after the end of the protest. The latest round of arrests show that the government is worried about the possible confluence of protests -- in support of the Chief Justice and against the restrictions on press freedom. End Comment.
BODDE